

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 5, 2007

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 12: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 12 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to acquire tax defaulted properties in the upper Santa Clara River watershed and the San Gabriel Mountains, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 12 funds in the amount of \$150,000 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to acquire tax defaulted properties in the upper Santa Clara River watershed and the San Gabriel Mountains, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204(c) of the Public Resources Code

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has been acquiring tax defaulted properties through Chapter 8 Agreements in the northern portion of Los Angeles County since the passage of Proposition 12 in 2000. Those acquisitions have spanned from Chatsworth (Santa Susana Mountains) to the County-designated Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) in the southern portion of the Antelope Valley. Many of the acquisitions cost less than \$2,000 per acre. The bulk of the MRCA's acquisitions in the upper Santa Clara River watershed, San Gabriel Mountains and Sierra Pelona range have been via Chapter 8 Agreement. The funding has come through Los Angeles County Proposition A, in lieu mitigation fees, miscellaneous small contributions, and two small Proposition 12 grants from the Conservancy over six years ago. For example in June 2007 the MRCA is slated to acquire 240 acres via Chapter 8 Agreement across a wide swath of northern Los Angeles using over six funding sources.

With this June 2007 Chapter 8 Agreement payment, the MRCA will have no remaining mitigation funding to continue this important program. Furthermore, the Conservancy's Proposition 84 funding cannot be expended in the Santa Clara River watershed or in any area north of the San Gabriel Mountains ridgeline. To provide regional balance, it makes great sense to spend this increment of nearly exhausted Proposition 12 funding in non-Proposition 84 eligible areas. The MRCA has sent the attached letter and application requesting a grant of \$150,000 to acquire tax defaulted properties in the subject area. All of the proposed funding would be used directly to pay the Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector for Chapter 8 Agreement parcels and the inherent agreement fees in these areas.